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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS, U.S.-JAPAN SECURITY
PACT

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage May 8 on a DPP press conference Monday, in which all the party's presidential contenders vowed to support former Premier Frank Hsieh as the party's presidential candidate for the 2008 presidential election. The pro-status quo "China Times" carried an exclusive news story on page eleven with the headline "Lee Jye Speaks out against the United States' Opposition to [Taiwan's Development of] Offensive Missiles."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed the U.S.' Taiwan policy and said "even though the United States extended a goodwill gesture toward China over the Taiwan issue, it does not mean that for Washington, Taiwan's strategic importance is reduced." An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" commented on the U.S.-Japan security pact and said the two countries "are growing reluctant to be drawn into a conflict with China over Taiwan's push for statehood." End summary.

¶3. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

"Small Changes in the United States' Taiwan Policy, but General Direction Remains Unchanged"

Nan Hua University's Department of International Studies Director Emerson Chang opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (5/5):

"Is there any change in the United States' policy toward Taiwan? The three big actions recently taken by the State Department for three consecutive days starting May 1 have drawn people's attention: First, the 2005 statement regarding 'encouraging that all cross-Straight related issues be resolved peacefully via dialogue' was scrapped from the joint declaration following the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee meeting in 2007. Second, Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, when testifying before the House

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Foreign Affairs Committee, said without following his prepared speech text that '[some] political actors in Taiwan try in some way to change the status quo by name change, calling for referendums or changing the constitution.' Third, AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young pointed out in his press conference that 'the United States does not support Taiwan's development of long-range offensive missiles.' Regarding the aforementioned developments, political and academic circles in Beijing believe that they were results of improved Beijing-Washington relations and Beijing-Tokyo ties. But this writer sees it exactly the opposite way and believes they were the result of increasing tension in China-U.S. relations. ...

"Both Washington and Beijing are now trapped in a security impasse,

and the evidence included: for the sake of the war on terrorism, the United States has extended its power into West and Central Asia via the war in Afghanistan. China, citing the war on terrorism as its justification, also established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and invited Russia and some Central Asian countries to join the organization. Later on, the United States further used the war on terrorism as an excuse to launch a war in Iraq, in an attempt to gain control of the oil resources in the Mideast. China, on the other hand, started a pearl chain strategy to ensure the safety of oil transportation from the Indian Ocean to South China Sea. ...

"Second, a security impasse will deteriorate into a crisis and further into a conflict. Washington believes that China's strategic planning will put both sides in the face of a major crisis in the future, particularly when it comes to cross-Straits issues. ... Given the fact that the situation's development may some day lead both sides to catastrophic destruction, the United States is obviously unwilling to engage in a race with China over Taiwan, as it does not concur with U.S. interests. Washington therefore sought to cool the situation and resolve China's hostility before the latter starts deployment based on its anti-interference strategy. The approach Washington adopted was to reduce the stimulus of the Taiwan issue toward China, and that is why we saw the three big actions being taken [by Washington]. Last, even though the United States extended a goodwill gesture toward China over the Taiwan issue, it does not mean that for Washington, Taiwan's strategic importance is reduced. ..."

14. U.S.-Japan Security Pact

"US-Japan Pact Expanding"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (5/8):

"Japan is ready to become a 'normal country' by amending its antiwar constitution with the approval of the U.S., the original writer of that charter. Meanwhile, concerns regarding Taiwan, always a factor PACT

in U.S.-Japan security planning, were dropped for the first time in their talks last week in Washington. It's not as if the two allies no longer care about Taiwan's security, but they are growing reluctant to be drawn into a conflict with China over Taiwan's push for statehood. ... "

YOUNG